

THE U.S. VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

The U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) allows citizens of 36 countries to enter the U.S. for up to 90 days for business or tourism without a visa. Those 36 countries are as follows: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Rep, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

For more information please visit Visa Waiver Passport Requirements on the following website: <http://www.dhs.gov>

Beginning January 12, 2009 all nationals and citizens of Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries will be required by law to obtain a travel authorization prior to initiating travel to the United States under the VWP. This authorization may be obtained online through the electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), a free Internet application administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through a U.S. government website. Eligible visitors seeking to travel to the United States under the VWP may apply for travel authorization via the ESTA website at: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

As announced previously by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, passports issued on or after October 26, 2005 to VWP citizens must include a digital photo in order to be valid for travel to the U.S. without a visa. Travelers whose passports do not meet this biometric requirement will need to obtain a valid U.S. visa for admission into the U.S. VWP citizens requiring a visa will be subject to all of the fees and wait times normally applicable for visa applicants.

VWP travelers with machine-readable passports issued before October 26, 2005 do not need to obtain new passports or visas in order to travel to the U.S.

Please note that at present the new passport requirements do **not** apply to persons traveling on official and/or diplomatic passports.

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